

October 2007

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By The Numbers**Sept. 2007**

New Subdivisions Reviewed '06	79
Zoning Cases Reviewed	136
Floodplain development Permits Issued	5
Acres in Final Plans Reviewed	357
Tract Surveys	153

TrendLines

Planning today for tomorrow's vital and livable communities.

THE LEAD: Planning Commission Celebrates 50th Anniversary!

It is always a treat to celebrate an anniversary, and a golden anniversary is one to celebrate indeed! That is why the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission (SCRPC) is excited that this year marks the 50th year that the Commission has been serving Springfield and Sangamon County.

In the late 1950's, full time planning was a recent arrival in Springfield and Sangamon County. The Area Planning Commission, as it was called, held it's first meeting in January 1956. Fourteen months later, in March 1957, the Sangamon County Planning Commission was born and was followed in June 1957 by the joint group known as the Springfield Plan Commission.

According to the 1959 Annual Report, "While two separate official Commissions exist on paper, they meet and operate jointly as one and are served by one staff. All committees are made up of both City and County representatives for members realize that problems of the City are also problems of the County and vice versa." By 1966 the two Commissions had joined forces.

Eight citizens living outside the incorporated areas of Springfield organized to form the Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission. With the urging of State Law, leaders saw the need to plan new growth in Sangamon County and help revitalize areas beginning to deteriorate

Early the first year, the Sanga-



mon County Planning Commission hired its first Executive Director, Charles Aguar, and set up an office at 617 East Jefferson in Springfield. Some notable accomplishments in the first year of conception for the Commission include the adoption of a Land Subdivision ordinance, the adoption of a Street and Thoroughfare Plan, the adoption of Off-Street Parking and Loading requirements, among others.

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THE SECOND STORY: Photos to Capture Our Best

Time to celebrate your community and the individuals who made it what it is today. This October, the American Planning Association (APA) will launch its inaugural month-long celebration of planning with National Community Planning Month (see Page 3). This is an opportunity to honor the contributions of the planning profession and the individuals who make our

communities desirable places to live, work and recreate.

"Planning decisions made today will influence how our communities will look and feel in the future," said David Siegal, AICP, President of APA. "Planners are the visionaries that help communities adjust to the changes while satisfying resident needs."

This year's theme is "Great

Streets, Great Neighborhoods." The SSCRPC is joining the celebration by asking residents

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*“Municipalities
are more-and-
more being faced
with quality of life
expectations that
are demanding”*

SSCRPC is 50 (continued from page 1)

Projected programs for the year 1960 included a new comprehensive Springfield Zoning Ordinance, County Land Subdivision standards, educational materials sent to school classrooms for city and regional planning subjects, and the introduction of local planning services to small towns and villages within Sangamon County.

Today, the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission is made up of 17 Com-

mission members and 10 staff members. The Planning Commission continues to thrive and provides overall planning services related to land use, housing, recreation, transportation, economics, environment and special projects.

Although it continues to carry out its responsibilities related to zoning, land use and transportation planning, the SSCRPC is moving into a number of new planning areas that will benefit communi-

ties though out the County. These include floodplain planning, hazard mitigation planning, and tracking and analyzing demographic and social data.

Recently the Commission staff has been very involved with Quantum-5, the joint economic development effort of the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, the City of Springfield and Sangamon County.

We're now looking forward to that 75th anniversary!

RESEARCH REPORT: Less Than 5% of Commuters Use Public Transit

A new US Census Bureau analysis of data from the American Community Survey found that only 4.7% of commuters used public transit to get to work in 2005.

As one might expect, public transit was more popular in large urban areas, with 10 of the 50 larg-

est US cities (including Chicago) accounting for about half of public transit commuters.

The study found that only about one in 10 commuters carpool to work, and almost 80% of those only carpool with one other person.

Portland, OR, had the highest percentage of workers traveling by bike (3.5%, which is eight times the national average of 0.4%), and San Francisco the largest number of residents working from home (6.3% compared to a national rate of 3.6%).

Photos to Capture Our Best (continued from page 1)

to submit photos of the favorite street in their neighborhood as part of the celebration. Telling SSCRPC about your favorite street is as simple as taking a photograph and writing a paragraph or two describing the street and what makes it “great” to you.

You might consider: how it reflects your neighborhood's character; its unique features; its history; how it has, or has not, changed over time; what you want it to be like in the future; what might be done to improve it; and what it means to you. The deadline for

submissions has been extended to Nov. 15, 2007.

Slides should not be provided, but either prints or digital images will be accepted. Prints should be mailed to: Attn. Planning Month, SSCRPC, Room 212, 200 South 9th Street, Springfield, IL 62701-1629.

Photos in digital format may be sent by mail on CD-ROM, or emailed to the Commission staff at sscrpc@co.sangamon.il.us. If sent by email the subject line indicate “Planning Month” and the name of the sender. All submis-

sions must include the name, address and phone number of the submitter. Photos will be displayed at the SSCRPC and one submitter's photo will be featured in the next issue of TrendLines.

Photos submitted become the property of the Commission and may be used in future planning documents. If used the photographer will be credited.

So while you are out snapping photos this fall, take a few of the “great streets” where you live!

FUTURE WATCH: What Single Women Want

With single women now making up 22% of home buyers, up 14% from a decade ago, the attention of planners, architects and developers is turning to what single women want in a home.

The August 2007 issue of *Builder* magazine (pp. 116-121) reports that independent women now represent "a fast-growing, but largely underserved, buyer segment". But the question remains, what does this market segment want in a home?

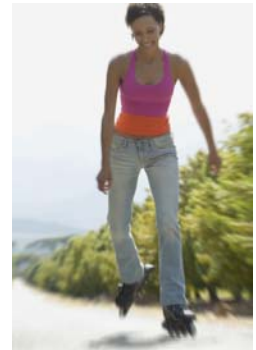
Based upon case studies of four neighborhoods that sold well to single women, *Builder* found that these developments had some common factors.

They include: right-sized housing with increased functionality (for example, simple, flexible floorplans); a connection to nature (developments that include greenbelts and houses with garden rooms); tasteful aesthetics (semi-custom trim packages, built-ins and interior finishes); and a safe

environment.

And it is important to note that the single women buying homes are not just the young.

Paul Glosniak, president of Bennett Homes, points out that as the Boomer generation is entering retirement planners and builders must be mindful of "older single women who may not want to take care of a 3,500-square-foot house anymore and certainly don't need that much space".



LEGAL WATCH: Conditions of Variation in Zoning

Under Illinois zoning law, local authorities may grant a petitioner a type of relief often called a "variation" or "variance". This action provides the petitioner with relief from specific limitations of the zoning ordinance. But in granting the variance the local

authority cannot grant the relief on a whim, and must find that the petitioner has demonstrably met the "conditions of variation".

These are: (1) the property in question cannot yield a reasonable return if the property is permitted to be used only under the condi-

tions allowed by the regulations in that zone; and (2) the plight of the owner is due to unique circumstances; and (3) the variation, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the area. For the legal specifics, see 65 ILCS 5/11-13.4.

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Commission Receives FEMA Grant for Hazard Mitigation

The Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission has been awarded a contract for a Hazard Mitigation Planning grant in the amount of \$46,167 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. This funding represents 75% of the cost to develop the plan for the County, and Sangamon County will provide the remaining 25% through staff involvement.

A task force will be created, with representatives from each community in Sangamon County that chooses to participate, as well as

technical partners and other stakeholders. The first meeting will be held October 10, 2007 at 5:30pm in the County Board Chamber located on the 2nd floor of the Sangamon County Complex, 200 S. Ninth Street. Meetings will be held monthly and public participation is strongly encouraged. Citizens of Sangamon County are welcome to attend every meeting of the task force.

"The development and maintenance of a Hazard Mitigation Plan is important to the welfare of all of us in Sangamon County," said

Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission Executive Director Norm Sims. "Any one of us could be affected by a future natural disaster, and this plan will help the Commission to identify these hazards and find ways to mitigate their effects on our communities and families. We hope that all of the communities in the area take part in this effort."

Specific opportunities for public input will be available. For more information call Linda Wheeland at (217) 535-3110 or email HazardPlan@co.sangamon.il.us.



SSCRPC

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Upcoming Events:

- **October is National Community Planning Month.**
- **Submit photographs of your favorite streets and neighborhoods by Nov. 15 (extended deadline!)**
See Page 1 for more information.

About the Springfield Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission



The Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission (SSCRPC) serves as the joint planning body for the City of Springfield and Sangamon County. The Planning Commission also works with other public and semi-public agencies throughout the area to promote orderly growth and redevelopment.

The Commission has 17 members including representatives from the Sangamon County Board, Springfield City Council, special units of government, and 6 appointed citizens from the city and county. The Executive Direc-

tor is appointed by the Executive Board of the Commission.

The Planning Commission, through its professional staff, provides overall planning services related to land use, housing, recreation, transportation, economics, environment, and special projects.

The agency prepares area-wide planning documents and assists the county, cities, and villages, as well as special districts, with planning activities. The staff reviews all proposed subdivisions and makes recommendations on all county zoning and variance requests. The agency serves

as the Floodplain Administrator, Census coordinator, and local A-95 review clearinghouse to process and review all federally funded applications for the county. The agency also maintains existing base maps, census tract maps, township and zoning maps and the road name map for the county.

The Planning Commission's Executive Director is also the Plats Officer for Sangamon County. Divisions of land must be reviewed by the Plats Officer to insure compliance with the State Plat Act and local zoning and subdivision regulations.